

Post-Event Summary Report

Name of Event: 20th Annual Oklahoma Minority Aging Conference

Date of Event: March 23-25, 2005

Location of Event: Hilton Tulsa Southern Hills, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Number of Persons attending: 300

Sponsoring Organization(s): Oklahoma Task Force on Minority Aging

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Priority Issue #1:

Social Security (SS) - to secure SS and not resort to privatization

Barriers:

Funding and lack of education

Proposed Solutions:

1. Outreach is needed to provide more education to the seniors from entities without vested interest.
2. Communities need to become politically active and engaged; citizens need to speak to their Congressman.
3. SS administration needs to be more elder friendly.
4. Additional funding needed for increased burial benefits from SS.
5. More taxes to provide more services.
6. Disseminate information at the local level (i.e., churches, senior centers)
7. Develop partnerships and collaborations between federal, state, tribal and community programs.

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Priority Issue #2:

Prescription and Medicare part D – the high cost of drugs and the confusing Medicare benefits on prescriptions.

Barriers:

Affordability of drugs and over the counter medications as well
The elderly do not know how where or how to get the services they need.
Lack of understanding even among providers on the different drug cards that are available.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Provide more education; utilize more media sources (including television and radio).
2. Make drugs more affordable.
3. Provide information at the local level.
4. Develop partnerships and collaborations between federal, state, tribal, community and private programs.

Priority Issue #3:

Medicare

Barriers:

Very confusing issues, there is imbalance of coverage between young disabled and seniors who work
Simplify medication information and criteria.
Lack of coordination of services

Proposed Solutions:

1. Lower eligibility criteria.
2. Need more outreach at the local level. Ask people in the community.
3. Develop partnerships and collaboration between federal, state, tribal and community programs.

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Priority Issue #4:

Transportation; especially for rural areas. Isolation of the seniors and other mental health problems are consequent problems from lack of transportation. Oklahoma is a rural state with over 40% of residents located in rural areas.

Barriers:

Lack of state and federal funds.

Overlap of services, lack of coordination, and lack of partnerships.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Outreach at the local level.
2. Streamlining of programs and qualifying criteria.
3. Improve access to services.
4. Allow more flexibility at the local level for funding.
5. Better communication between state and local agencies.

Priority Issue #5:***In home services*****Barriers:**

Disparities between funding sources.

Lack of continuum of services (i.e., from Adult day care to assisted living and long term care facilities)

Lack of caregiver training.

Criteria and qualification of providers are not clear or standardized.

Conflicting information about home health programs.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Increase funding for senior centers.
2. Permanent passage of the Older Americans Act
3. More supportive services (i.e. chore service and lawn care programs, spring cleaning and donations).
4. Collaborate with churches, find private sponsors, volunteers.

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5. Outreach, increase public awareness, provide more consumer education.
6. Utilize summer youth program.
7. Publicize Advantage program.
8. Provide exercise program.
9. Provide adaptive services and equipment for all ages.
10. More collaboration between colleges and home care agencies (including the utilization of students).
11. More coordinated information from Area Agencies on Aging.
12. More collaboration between private and health care agencies.
13. More collaboration between local and tribal entities.

Other Issues (not ranked in order):

Health care delivery and access

Lack of quality of care in Long Term Care facilities (Requirement of more training for nursing aides, offer career ladder).

Elder Abuse

Depression

Grandparents raising grandchildren (lack of benefits for grandparents)

Services for visually impaired

Quality of nutrition programs and commodities program- the lack of nutrition values in the foods provided

Need for senior employment

Lack of gerontology professionals to provide care and services to the senior population

Retirement security for ages 60-65

Fraud

Uninsured persons

Lack of providers in rural areas (i.e., Physicians)

Affordable housing – that fosters independent living among elders

Lack of legal services.

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